

Message Text

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ACTION OC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5888

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 14205

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ACOM, VE

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON-CARACAS LEASED TELETYPE CIRCUIT

REF: STATE 290526

1. JACOBI AEPLI, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY, OF CAN-TV, CONFIRMED WHAT WE HAD HEARD CONCERNING THE ADVERSE REACTION OF THE GOV TO THE INSTALLATION OF OUR SKYLINK SATELLITE FACILITIES. HE STATED THAT THIS MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND THAT THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE SITUATION. HE SAID THAT THE USE OF SUCH FACILITIES CLEARLY WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF VENEZUELAN LAW. WHILE THE EMBASSY AS A DIPLOMATIC PROPERTY WAS "OURS", NEVERTHELESS RADIO FREQUENCIES WERE "THEIRS." HE ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN ANTICIPATING FOR SOMETIME THE INSTALLATION OF SUCH EQUIPMENT ON OUR PART SINCE HE WAS AWARE THAT WE HAD INSTALLED SUCH FACILITIES AT OTHER POSTS AROUND THE WORLD AND THAT IN SOME CASES THE EQUIPMENT HAD BEEN DISGUISED. IN VENEZUELA AT THE MOMENT THE MATTER WAS OF SOME DELICACY BECAUSE OF CERTAIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLOMBIA OVER FREQUENCIES ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON WHAT THE LINKAGE MIGHT BE. HE WARNED AGAINST PRESENTING THE GOV WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

2. AEPLI STATED THAT THE ONLY WAY HE COULD SEE OF RESOLVING THIS SITUATION WAS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF RECIPROCITY. THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON SHOULD BE PERMITTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF SIMILAR
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FACILITIES. THIS WOULD INCLUDE THEIR USE OF ONE OF

OUR CHANNELS ON THE SKYLINK SATELLITE. HE REALIZED, HE SAID, THAT THE FIRST OBJECTION WOULD BE THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE EXPECTED TO IMMEDIATELY REQUEST SIMILAR FACILITIES. HE WAS SURE THAT THE GOV WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO ANY SUCH AGREEMENT ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS AND WOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS ON THE INSTALLATION OF THE FACILITIES WHICH WOULD BE COMPLETED AT THEIR EXPENSE. HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY TRANSMIT HIS PROPOSAL AND GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM WHEN THE RESPONSE BECAME AVAILABLE.

3. AEPLI IS FRIENDLY, PRO-U.S. AND HIGHLY COMPETENT. HE IS ALSO A VERY TOUGH NEGOTIATOR. HIS CONCEPT OF PLUGGING THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY INTO THE SKYLINK SATELLITE IS OBVIOUSLY AN OPENING GAMBIT AND WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE THE LAST WORD. HE TOUCHED LIGHTLY, FOR INSTANCE, ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR CONCEDING FREE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY THROUGH TRADITIONAL CHANNELS AS A POSSIBLE FALLBACK POSITION. HE DISCARDED OUT OF HAND ANY FORM OF ORDINARY RADIO PRIVILEGES AT THE EMBASSY AS "USELESS."

4. WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO JUDGE THE TECHNICAL MERITS OF HIS PROPOSAL OR OF ANY ALTERNATIVE. WE SIMPLY POINT OUT OUR IMPRESSION OF AEPLI AS A MAN WHO WILL NOT BE SATISFIED WITH SYMBOLIC GESTURES. HE WAS WAY AHEAD OF US AND LAYING IN WAIT. HE NOW FIGURES HE HAS US AND HE IS GOING TO GET SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR PERMISSION TO USE OUR SKYLINK SATELLITE FACILITIES. PLEASE ADVISE.
VAKY

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